

COMMITTEE ON LANDS & BUILDINGS

June 30, 2003

5:15 PM

Chairman Thibault called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Thibault, Gatsas (late), Pinard, Garrity

Absent: Alderman DeVries

Messrs: R. MacKenzie, M. Scott, Alderman Lopez, Deputy City Solicitor
Arnold, C. Arthur Soucy, S. Tellier, J. Marchwicz

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Communication from Mariatou Scott of Prosperous Africa asking that the City consider donating a building or parcel of land for their NH African Information Center.

Chairman Thibault asked Mr. MacKenzie I wonder if you could enlighten the Committee here as to where we are at with this and what the City has.

Mr. Robert MacKenzie stated our staff has kind of looked around for different possible properties and frankly the City doesn't own any vacant buildings that would be suitable. The only surplus vacant building that we really have is the Brown School and that has been committed towards housing.

Chairman Thibault asked that is already encumbered to MHRA right.

Mr. MacKenzie answered MHRA and Families in Transition have been working on that one. We could not come up with a City building that would be usable for this type of operation. We would like to see if we could help them out and perhaps direct them to the Neighborhood Resource Center, which is located on Lake Avenue. The Neighborhood Resource Center is building some new programs now that they are separating from Southern NH Services and they may have a room that this organization could use at least in the interim. It may not be big enough long-term for them but they might want to review and meet with the Board of the MCRC who runs the building to see if there is room there for them.

Chairman Thibault called Ms. Scott forward. Could you enlighten this Committee as to exactly what you are looking for and why? If this Committee feels that this should be brought to the full Board for consideration, we would be glad to do that. However, you heard our Planning Director telling you now exactly where the City stands at this point. If you want to say anything, I have no problem hearing what you have to say.

Ms. Mariatou Scott stated thank you for letting us be here tonight. The reason we are requesting this from the City is because it is the only way we can come and ask for assistance for this center. This center is going to be housed in Manchester and in order for us to really be efficient to what we are planning to do, which is assisting African immigrants and refugees, we need a building to do that or in the meantime just temporary housing for us to hold our meetings or provide services for those people. It is really a need here now at this stage. We have a large number of Africans in Manchester and they are spreading north. The issues are relative. We are not really saying that the services we are receiving are not efficient or effective but we, as Africans, have a lot of cultural issues. We like to deal with ourselves, with each other and we are encountering a lot of cultural friction when we go for services because of language barriers or understanding of how to assimilate into the system. Also, even integrating into the system because people are being isolated because they don't want to be part of it. The center is going to be a welcoming center for them for them to understand that they are here now and they have to adapt to this new system and this new society and to learn about the laws, the culture and assimilate to it. That is the main reason we are asking the City to look other ways. If there is no building the City has for us at least orient us to where we can obtain something in the meantime on a temporary basis.

Alderman Pinard asked how many African people are in the Queen City right now.

Ms. Scott answered what I heard is that we are at 700. That does not include the newcomers, which are going to be 300 from Somali.

Alderman Pinard asked have you tried any other community besides the City of Manchester.

Ms. Scott answered no we did not because this is where a large number of Africans reside.

Alderman Pinard asked if we cannot provide you with a building like the Planning Director stated what are you going to do.

Ms. Scott answered we have been running in and out of the Greater Manchester Aids Project.

Alderman Pinard asked have you tried the Diocese of Manchester where they have a church up for sale at the present time.

Ms. Scott answered yes we did but they don't have anything available. One thing that the City of Manchester Housing Authority proposed to us last week is they may be able to provide us an office on an interim basis but we are not sure how long that is going to be. Having a center is going to be very good for us because that is where we will be able to help the most people.

Alderman Lopez asked is the organization still based out of Hooksett.

Ms. Scott answered yes. We have a mail address in Hooksett and we operate out of Hooksett.

Alderman Lopez asked do you have a building or facility.

Ms. Scott answered actually I operate from my own apartment.

Alderman Lopez asked but the organization is listed as being in Hooksett correct.

Ms. Scott answered yes.

Alderman Lopez stated Mr. Chairman I spoke to Eddie Girard of Lafayette Press. He called me today in reference to this. I agree with the Planning Director that Mark might be the best person to talk to at the present time. In reading the letter I think they have to define what they are looking for. They say a building. Are you looking for a meeting place? What type of space are you looking for? I think Mark at the Neighborhood Resource Center can help you find what you are looking for. I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

Chairman Thibault asked are you looking for a meeting place. Is that what you are looking for?

Ms. Scott answered we are looking for a building for our center.

Chairman Thibault responded that may be tough. If you are looking for a meeting place, I think that we could probably ask a few people in the City to provide you with a meeting place until you get organized to the point where you can buy a building or whatever. I don't know where that fine line might be but I think we could probably provide you a place to meet prior to you getting a building because

the City doesn't just hand out buildings. Frankly, we don't have any. We have in the past given some out, you are right but I don't believe as you heard the Planning Director tell you a few minutes ago that we have any at this point that are available to be given out or leased out or whatever. If you are looking just for a meeting place at this point, that would be something that we might be able to help with. You could pursue the idea of eventually trying to get a building if ever something comes available that we feel is equitable to what you are looking for.

Ms. Scott replied that is acceptable. We can do that.

Chairman Thibault asked where do you meet now.

Ms. Scott answered our first meeting was at the Greater Manchester Aids Project on 77 Pearl Street. We use that office for meeting with people and also for our general meetings. The second meeting was held just yesterday at the apartment of one of our friends. Most of these people are only available on the weekends and offices are not open on the weekend so we need something flexible to meet our needs when people aren't working.

Chairman Thibault stated I would ask Mr. MacKenzie to come forward again. Is there a way that we could provide some school building or someplace where these people could meet as a regular...let's say once a month or every other month? Can we help these people establish a place to meet and then go from there? I am just wondering, Bob, if you know of anything we can do.

Mr. MacKenzie responded I do know that the School Administration does after hours in school buildings allow use of it for...I think there have been church sessions and after school youth programs at some of the schools and there have even been some Y programs but that would be for the School Board to determine whether there was a usable space for that. There are a number of schools – there are 22 schools in the City but if the School Board would consider that, that is an option.

Chairman Thibault asked is there some way that we could direct Ms. Scott to try to address that and see if there is room or a way for her to address her problems. Do you think we should ask her to go to the School Board? Who would she talk to?

Mr. MacKenzie answered she would talk to the School Administration.

Chairman Thibault asked could you enlighten her as to where she might go and what she might do and if she doesn't get any satisfaction and she wants to come back to this Committee that is no problem. I think probably that is where she should be addressing her problem.

On motion of Alderman Garrity duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to receive and file this item.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Communication from Robert S. MacKenzie, Planning Director, regarding the Request for Proposal for a parcel of land on Old Wellington Road.

The Clerk noted that a memo from Alderman Osborne was distributed this evening stating his opposition to disposing of this property.

Mr. MacKenzie stated the Committee asked us to put together a request for proposals and I mentioned some of the conditions but I would like to run through those conditions with you again if you wouldn't mind. They are on the sheet that was part of the agenda. We did discuss that the property will pay property taxes at the normal rate. The property should be developed in housing with at least 15% being affordable workforce housing according to guidelines and that there should be a portion of the project that is market rate housing. That there be some conditions to show that the prospective purchaser has the capability of actually purchasing it. That they would be able to enter into a purchase and sales before October 31. That they could demonstrate that they could close on the property before June 30, 2004. Again, those are to make sure that we would meet the financial deadlines to meet the budget requirements. The City on their behalf would rezone the balance of the property to R-SM, which is a multi-family housing district. Most of the parcel is now zoned R-SM, which allows multi-family but a small portion, roughly 20% of it, is not zoned that way. Also, we would like to know whether that particular group would be asking for any of the City's housing funds, affordable housing funds just so that if we compare proposals we would be able to compare apples with apples. Finally, we did put a minimum bid at this point of \$600,000. At this point that is just based upon my experience with land for apartments and what it is going for. I do believe you could get somewhere between 60 and 70 units on the property and I think the going rate for vacant land is roughly \$10,000 per apartment unit. I do think we should establish a minimum bid for this. If they don't bid more than \$600,000 I am not sure if that would be a good deal for the City.

Alderman Garrity stated I have a question and I think it is for the attorney. If we send this out to bid and they meet all of the requirements and then this Board decides to not sell the property are we held liable at all?

Deputy City Solicitor Arnold answered it depends on how the bid is structured. I could do it so you would not be obligated to accept the high bid so to speak but that would probably affect your ability to be able to market the property.

Alderman Garrity asked so is the answer yes or no.

Deputy City Solicitor Arnold answered yes you could do it.

Alderman Pinard stated Bob you and I had a discussion and I had a discussion with Ron Ludwig. Have you discussed this with Parks & Recreation regarding using that land in the future for a park? Has all of that been looked at? Mr. Osborne feels that that particular piece of land is very valuable to the City for park purposes and you are the Planner so maybe you could answer that question for me.

Mr. MacKenzie responded there are pros and cons to selling this parcel. I do not see at the present time any clear and present need, public need, for the property. There could be a long-term need for the property but I can't say for sure whether that is true or not. If you look at parkland, there are a number of parks immediately around that area. There is Derryfield Park, Stevens Pond Park and Derryfield Country Club, which are relatively near this site. Also, Parks & Recreation is focused on providing a larger park area in South Manchester, which it has been trying to find. I can't realistically tell you right now that there is a clear long-term need for a park in this area. It would be nice in the best of worlds to keep the property and land bank it but I also don't see many options for the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to meet their budget hole of \$650,000. In my mind to do it by October 31 you realistically only have two options. This parcel or the Canal Street garage. We are going to try to stay on schedule but I do believe that some decisions will have to be made at the July 15 meeting in order to stay on schedule. Time will go by very rapidly and again based on my experience you are not going to make enough money on small sales to meet that budget guideline of \$650,000.

Alderman Pinard asked is this particular parcel of land we are using now...as stated to me by some individuals is this a quick fix so our tax rate will not go up if we don't get a certain amount of money for the budget.

Mr. MacKenzie answered to some extent it is a quick fix although there are other positive things about it. Long-term as you can see in the guidelines it would pay property taxes. It could pay as much as \$200,000 a year in property taxes which is not necessarily a quick fix but it would help our City budget throughout the next number of years. Secondly, we are in a very tight housing situation, particularly for affordable housing and this site could help in that regard. Partly it is a quick

fix to plug the budget hole but there are a couple of other positives you could look at and argue that longer term it could help the City.

Alderman Pinard stated if I remember correctly a few years back there was a shortage of land for parks throughout the City. Is that a true statement?

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes.

Alderman Pinard asked so wouldn't it be fair to say that maybe we should reserve this particular parcel of land for future use because of the growth in that area. If we have a shortage of land in the City and probably the only area left is on Hackett Hill Road I think it would be very wise...we have held it now for some 20+ years and I don't think it would hurt to hold it for another few years with that purpose. I don't think that the general public of the City will appreciate a quick fix when they get their tax bill.

Alderman Garrity stated to an extent it is a quick fix but the \$200,000 for taxes for the general fund I don't consider a quick fix. Regarding this park discussion, Derryfield Park is right there practically and then you have the Derryfield Country Club. This doesn't solve the park issues down in the South end of Manchester. How long have we had this property?

Mr. MacKenzie answered it has been over 20 years I believe since the City has owned it.

Alderman Lopez stated 40 years.

Mr. MacKenzie responded I know it is longer than 20 years.

Alderman Garrity stated \$200,000 a year for taxes...obviously you are not going to multiply that by 40 by just multiply it by 5 years and that is \$1 million in taxes. The fact that there is green space and parks that practically abut the area...I don't buy this argument that it needs to be used for a park. It doesn't solve the South end of Manchester's park issues.

Alderman Pinard stated I think we have to be very careful in what we do because we do have a shortage of land. Mr. MacKenzie is the Planner and I think we should follow his guidelines but my concern is if we put a For Sale sign on it let's do it and do it right. Let's make sure that we are doing the right thing.

Alderman Lopez stated for the record I spent 18 years on the Parks & Recreation Commission and I want to tell you that that land has never been considered for recreation. It has been an isolated piece of land that has been there. I agree with

Alderman Garrity about needing parkland in the South. I know I have talked to Alderman DeVries. That is where the area of concentration is. It has been a long time that the land has been there. We could hold it forever and it is not going to accomplish anything. Twenty years from now they will still be talking about it. I encourage the Committee to agree with the Planning Director and put it out for RFP.

Alderman Lopez stated I have a couple of questions that I would like to ask. I know that in talking to the Parks & Recreation Director...well I think it makes sense that many times we get a rid of a piece of land and then five or ten years down the road we go out and pay twice the price to acquire a piece of land to make a park or do whatever. I think that is something that we should look at before we do this. I am not saying it shouldn't be done. I am saying it is something that we should certainly look at. Then I look at the neighbor's problems in the area. As I understand in talking to one of the neighbors today, they have gotten together and put up close to \$400,000 to bid on this land to leave it the way it is. I don't know how the Committee feels but that to me says that it is probably something we should look at more carefully then we have looked at it. This aside, we are also talking about the Riverside property that has been up for sale. They tell me that this land is prime land to be developed. I wonder where we should go. Where should this Committee go on this? What should we do here? If we are looking just to make money then I don't think that is the right step. Are we looking to do the right thing I think is the right step. I would ask the Committee again which way they want to go on this. I would be willing to go either way on this due to the fact that on one side when you look at it there are some favorable reasons to stay there and on the other side there are favorable reasons to go the other way too.

Alderman Lopez stated I just want to bring a couple of things to your attention so the Committee can make a decision.

Chairman Thibault stated that Alderman Gatsas has just arrived.

Alderman Lopez stated we have to remember that this is land that belongs to the City and it doesn't belong to any one ward. Again, this property has been sitting there and we are short housing in the City of Manchester. That is a report that we received as Aldermen. I think we are doing our fiduciary responsibility and I urge the Committee to let the RFP go out and see what happens.

Alderman Garrity asked can we put something in writing where if we do send it out to RFP...I mean just to get an idea of what it is worth and what we can get for it.

Deputy City Solicitor Arnold responded I can work with Mr. MacKenzie on that.

Alderman Garrity asked how long would that take.

Deputy City Solicitor Arnold answered about five minutes.

Chairman Thibault asked do you want to table it.

Alderman Garrity answered he said it would take five minutes.

Alderman Garrity moved that we send the parcel of land on Old Wellington Road out for an RFP.

Alderman Gatsas asked the R-SM zoning, what is the projection for number of units on 9.6 acres.

Mr. MacKenzie answered it would be higher but there are really three parts to this site. One is a fairly steep hillside, which is probably not going to be developable. The very Southern part is wetland adjacent to Steven's Pond. Based upon my quick look at the property, the central portion is a nice area and probably could support 60-70 apartments or condominiums.

Alderman Gatsas asked you couldn't get a greater density factor on there with 9.6 acres even though it was not usable.

Mr. MacKenzie answered the problem is that when you do the developable area calculations you have to exclude wetlands and steep slopes. It is going to come down to roughly 60-70 units. It may be as high as 75 but it wouldn't go any higher than that.

Alderman Gatsas asked when you say steep slopes are you talking ledge or just steep slopes.

Mr. MacKenzie answered a steep slope that goes up towards the Sunset Ridge area.

Alderman Gatsas asked so the minimum bid should be \$600,000 and if I took \$600,000 and divided it by 75 units that is roughly \$8,000 a unit. With City water and City sewer is that a reasonable number?

Mr. MacKenzie answered I think it will probably be higher. Again, that number to start with is a little low for the minimum bid. I think we should be able to get at least \$10,000 per unit. Again, we haven't pinned the unit range down but it is somewhere between 60 and 75 units depending on the type of housing they want

to put in. I put \$600,000 in there because if we use 60 units times \$10,000 per unit that would be \$600,000.

Alderman Gatsas asked didn't we just sell a piece on Pearl Street for in excess of \$10,000 a unit.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I believe there are 18 units there and we sold it for \$135,000.

Alderman Gatsas responded we sold it for less.

Chairman Thibault asked why did we sell it for less.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that property has limitations in that you could never build more units than that so probably because the property is already developed the land value is going to be a little bit lower.

Chairman Thibault asked what do you want to do with this.

Alderman Gatsas stated my understanding is that Parks is not in favor of selling this. Do I understand that correctly?

Chairman Thibault responded as far as I know they are not.

Alderman Lopez stated once again since Alderman Gatsas just joined us I want to tell him that with my experience on the Parks Commission for 18 years any Parks & Recreation Director is going to say let's keep the land because that is his fiduciary responsibility in this City. That land has been sitting there for 40 years. If Parks was going to do anything with it...it was never brought up in the 18 years I was on the Commission and I think we have done great in the City of Manchester with parks. I urge the Committee to send it out for RFP. Let's see what happens and if the City Solicitor is going to make a provision like Alderman Garrity has mentioned I think we will at least know exactly. Keep in mind that we do need housing for elderly.

Chairman Thibault stated one thing I have to say here because I have heard from Parks & Recreation also and believe me I appreciate the fact that Alderman Lopez is saying this but isn't it also a fact that many times Parks & Recreation goes out and buys land and we pay twice or three times the price. I am concerned about that. I would like to see how we can find a happy medium between all of that. I am not against selling this land but I don't want us to sell it for \$300,000 or \$400,000 and next year we have to go out and spend \$1 million to buy some land

to...let me just go one step further. Isn't it because Parks & Recreation has not had the money to expand what they wanted to expand? I am questioning that.

Alderman Lopez responded I can tell you in my 18 years on the Commission most of the land in the City of Manchester has been donated through Amoskeag Mills and some property has been donated by private owners for parkland in the City. On your agenda tonight I think you have an individual who wants to donate land for a dog park. I can assure you that and I don't have the figures but I can tell you that we haven't spent too much City tax dollars on buying land in this City for Parks & Recreation. We put a lot of money into our parks but we have a lot of parkland in this City.

Alderman Pinard asked can I ask C. Arthur Soucy a question. How many years did you spend on the Parks & Recreation Commission?

Mr. C. Arthur Soucy stated I spent 20 years on the Parks Commission.

Alderman Pinard asked what is your feeling on this.

Mr. Soucy answered I don't know the parcel or where it is so I really can't make any comment.

Alderman Pinard asked do you think that the City of Manchester should reserve some space for future use as parks.

Mr. Soucy answered certainly but where. I know the South end of Manchester needs parks because that has grown by leaps and bounds but I don't know about the North end or the West end of Manchester. I haven't been around parks for about 18 years.

Chairman Thibault stated if the Committee would be willing to look at this I would say why can't we call the Parks & Recreation Director over here to let us know where we are at with all of this land. To me, that would be where I think this thing should go.

Alderman Pinard moved to invite Mr. Ludwig and some of the Parks Commissioners to come to the next meeting and give the Committee an overview of parkland in the City. There was no second to the motion.

Alderman Lopez stated department heads have been instructed that any time there is an item on the agenda they should be here. They were here at the last meeting. I just encourage you to send the RFP out. There is always an opportunity for the Director to come here and there is always an opportunity for this Committee to

readdress it once they find the information. If it was so important, the Director would have been here tonight.

Chairman Thibault responded Mr. Ludwig called me today to tell me that he wouldn't be able to be here and asked me to make sure that the right decisions were made.

Alderman Lopez replied well he has a Deputy.

Chairman Thibault stated he had a problem that had to be taken care of.

Alderman Pinard moved to table this item. Alderman Gatsas duly seconded the motion. Chairman Thibault called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Reports, if available, from the Assessor and Tax Office regarding a request from James Bennett requesting to purchase a piece of City-owned property on Pond Drive (Map 779, Lot #14).

Note: Property was purchased by authorization of BMA 2/6/2001 for construction of sewage pumping station – not surplus property.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to deny this request advising that the property is not surplus to City needs.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 6 of the agenda:

Reports, if available, from Planning, Assessor, Tax and Solicitor regarding transferring the former Highland Goffs Falls School to Moore Center Services, Inc.

The Clerk recommended that this item be tabled as it is our understanding that further information will be forthcoming from the Moore Center regarding this request.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to table this item.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 7 of the agenda:

Report, if available, from Parks & Recreation regarding an offer to donate a parcel of land on Peabody Avenue for a dog park.

The Clerk noted that a memo from Ron Ludwig was distributed this evening stating that he would not recommend accepting the donation of land at this time.

Chairman Thibault stated I talked to Mr. Ludwig today. The City owns probably 500 or 600 pieces of land like this that people would love to donate to do this kind of thing. The point is the City would never be able to take care of them and all you would end up with there is dog fouling, which is against the law. I really believe that the people are trying to get away from the rule of law in taking care of their own pets. That is my feeling. If anybody has anything to add to that, please do.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Gatsas, it was voted to recommend that the Board not accept the donation of land.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 8 of the agenda:

Communication from Attorney Lamont, representing 1138 Elm Street, Inc. requesting to purchase a parcel of property known as Map 156, Lot 5, which abuts 1138 Elm Street.

The Clerk noted that memos from the Tax Office and Mr. William Jabjiniak were distributed this evening.

Mr. William Jabjiniak stated this is a parcel of land on the Southwest corner of Bridge and Elm Street adjacent to the Lamont Hanley building. It is a parcel that is owned by the State of New Hampshire. We own two adjoining parcels to the rear of that. He is asking for us to give up our rights in the parcel. I am saying that I want to make you aware that we have been exposing that property along with the two other parcels we own contiguous to this to potential developers on a fairly frequent basis so I guess I would be against giving up any rights to this.

Chairman Thibault asked where is that exactly. I think I am lost there.

Mr. Jabjiniak asked did you get a copy of the memo and the map. I believe Elm Street is marked on the map. Mr. Jabjiniak came forward and pointed out the parcel in question to the Committee members.

Alderman Gatsas asked who owns it.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered the State of NH is listed as the owner.

Alderman Gatsas asked so the State owns it.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered yes.

Alderman Gatsas asked so there is no reason for us...shouldn't we be looking to get acquisition of that and also piecing it in with the other piece on Hampshire Lane.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered I would say from a development standpoint that would be ideal. This letter appeared on the agenda and I said I am going to respond to it because we are trying to entice developers to look at that area as a great potential site.

Chairman Thibault asked how does the State end up owning this property.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered I believe it came from when they expanded Bridge Street.

Alderman Gatsas moved to have Mr. Jabjiniak go to the State to see if they will turn this parcel over to the City to add to the other parcels we own and put it on the market. Alderman Pinard duly seconded the motion.

Chairman Thibault called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman Gatsas asked what are we asking for those two pieces.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered I do not have a price tag on it. I have the assessment records as my only point of reference at this point for the other two parcels. I have not put an official number on it. That is up to the City Assessor to put a market value on it at this time.

Alderman Gatsas asked how have you been marketing it to developers.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered simply as a development opportunity and if they are interested they can come back and approach the City and we would be able to determine a value and go from there.

Alderman Gatsas asked do you think these people who were interested in the front piece would be interested in the entire parcel.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered yes.

Alderman Gatsas asked why don't we see if we can do an acquisition from the State and sell them the entire piece.

Mr. Jabjiniak responded I can approach Atty. Lamont and ask him if he is interested in that.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 9 of the agenda:

Communication from John Marchwicz requesting to purchase a parcel of land known as Map 218, Lot 22 located on Crescent Lane.

The Clerk noted that a memo from the Assessors Office was distributed this evening and that there is a memo from the Tax Office attached to the agenda.

Mr. Tellier brought a map forward to show the Committee the parcel of land that is being discussed.

Chairman Thibault asked is that something they can build on.

Mr. Tellier answered no.

Alderman Pinard moved to approve the request.

Alderman Gatsas stated I can't go along with \$5,000 minimum bid. It is an 11,000 square foot lot.

Mr. Tellier stated this happens quite often. You might have several small parcels that by themselves don't carry a lot of value but if they are combined and an action is taken to extend a sewer or extend a road then that would improve the subject parcel and that same parcel would be valued similar to most other improved parcels at that point. When it is residual land it is unimproved and it can't be improved because of constraints. In other words, a lack of road frontage or a lack of water and sewer and other utilities and they won't fetch a high value on the market.

Alderman Gatsas asked can I see the map again please. Discussion took place between Mr. Tellier and Alderman Gatsas regarding the possibility of this becoming a buildable lot if purchased by the abutter.

Mr. Tellier stated we could put this to bid.

Chairman Thibault asked why wouldn't we table this and get further information.

Mr. Tellier answered well the abutter hasn't applied for a variance but should a variance be granted that land would be more valuable.

Alderman Gatsas stated I don't have a problem going to public auction but I am not comfortable with the amount of \$5,000.

Alderman Gatsas moved to offer the property to the abutter for \$10,000.

Mr. John Marchwicz of 34 Crescent Lane stated I would like to purchase that piece of property. It is Lot 22 and 21A. It is all divided up into small parcels like 40' x 70' but once you add it all up it adds up to a little more.

Alderman Gatsas asked how much frontage do you have.

Mr. Marchwicz answered about 50' on Crescent Lane and about 120' or actually 80' on Liberty Lane, which is a paper road. Crescent Lane is also a paper road right now. I live across the street.

Chairman Thibault stated our interest is if, in fact, these parcels are put together and they go for a variance is it a buildable lot and if it is then it is worth more. I have just been notified that under the surplus land use we would have to get an idea from Planning as to what is going to happen there before anything can be done. I think that if somebody would table this and send it to Planning we could get a complete review of this.

Alderman Gatsas asked, John, where do you live now.

Mr. Marchwicz answered I live at 34 Crescent Lane, which is right across...I own Lot 50. I also own Lot 23.

Alderman Gatsas asked and right now Lot 23 is not a buildable lot.

Mr. Marchwicz answered right it is not at this time.

Alderman Gatsas asked and there is about 50' of frontage on Liberty Lane that comes up to that lot...I am sorry on Crescent.

Mr. Marchwicz answered on Lot 22 there is approximately 51.5'.

Alderman Gatsas asked of frontage.

Mr. Marchwicz answered that is on Crescent Lane.

Alderman Gatsas asked so you get to your lot through Highland Avenue.

Mr. Marchwicz answered yes. I am right across from Highland Avenue.

Alderman Gatsas asked so on Crescent how many feet of frontage do you have on Lot 23 that you actually have access to.

Mr. Marchwicz answered 80 feet.

Alderman Gatsas asked so if you combined these two it would then be a buildable lot without having to go for a variance.

Mr. Marchwicz answered yes I think it would be because you would need 100 feet for frontage.

Chairman Thibault stated I was told by the City Solicitor that we must have Planning review this before we do anything.

Mr. Tellier stated should Lot 23 have an actual 40' of frontage then clearly that additional land would be worth easily \$10,000 because that would contribute a great deal of utility to those sites. By the way, maybe Mr. Marchwicz could tell us do you have water and sewer?

Mr. Marchwicz stated there is no water on the street.

Mr. Tellier asked is there any sewer.

Mr. Marchwicz answered yes there is City sewer.

Chairman Thibault stated I am being told by the City Solicitor that we should send it to Planning to get a complete review of the area before we do anything.

Alderman Gatsas stated I took time out of my busy day as I know most of the members of this Committee did and for us to be coming in here without all of the information in front of us or department heads in front of us and making abutters come in when they are sending us letters about buying property is absolutely wrong. If we are looking to sell property in this City then we need to have the right information before us before we go forward and say we need to table something, we need to come back, we need to make other decisions because it certainly doesn't make any sense for us to sit here and waste our time because that is what we are doing right now and we are wasting somebody's time who came in and made an offer to the City.

Chairman Thibault asked so what do we want to do.

Alderman Gatsas replied how about you give us some direction. You are the Chairman. What would you like us to do?

Chairman Thibault stated I would like to direct Planning to come to this Committee and tell us their recommendation.

Mr. MacKenzie responded I just met today with our staff to review this particular piece of property. We were familiar with the parcel across Crescent Lane that I think was sold to Mr. Marchwicz a few years ago that was tax-deeded property. I think our concern is that we do need a little bit of time to determine whether this is going to be a buildable lot or not because that is a major swing in the land values. We could perhaps try to have a report available for the full Board if you wanted to refer it to the full Board at the July 15 meeting we would try to have an analysis and recommendation for that particular date. Again, I didn't look at this lot until today.

Chairman Thibault stated I have no problem with that if someone will make the motion.

Alderman Pinard moved to recommend that this go to public auction pending report from the Planning Department. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Gatsas asked are you looking for a vote.

Alderman Garrity stated I think we have a Lands and Buildings Committee for a reason and we aren't following that rule. I think this Committee should send a letter to the Chairman of the Board. We tried to address it at our last Committee meeting. We still don't have department heads here like we requested.

Chairman Thibault stated Bob MacKenzie is right behind you.

Alderman Garrity responded where is Ron Ludwig or Ron Johnson.

Chairman Thibault asked are they supposed to be here. What does Parks & Recreation have to do with this?

Alderman Garrity answered for the Wellington Road site. City business comes to a halt because we have no department head...I mean nobody who is supposed to be here is here.

Chairman Thibault asked do you want to table this.

Alderman Garrity replied I would like a letter going to the Chairman stating that he was supposed to take care of it. I get out of work at 5 PM and I am here at 5:15 PM and I am wasting my time.

Alderman Gatsas moved to table this item.

Chairman Thibault stated I said a few minutes ago that Parks & Recreation would be here at the next meeting. I have no problem with you tabling this or doing whatever you have to. It is up to you to do what you want.

The Clerk recommended that the Committee find that this property is surplus to City needs and that it be sold to the abutter and it can go as a Committee report to the full Board and in the meantime we can get the report from the Planning Department. I believe the only sticking point is the minimum bid price.

Alderman Gatsas stated I have a problem. We are here in Committee and we should see that before it goes to the full Board because maybe the price is going to come out as being \$1 and we aren't going to agree with it.

Chairman Thibault stated let's table it.

Alderman Gatsas stated I would assume that somebody would have known that this was on the agenda and all of those answers should have been addressed.

Chairman Thibault responded I have to tell you that is not the case. I didn't know about this problem at all.

Alderman Gatsas moved to table. Alderman Garrity duly seconded the motion.

Chairman Thibault called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 10 of the agenda:

Communication from Deputy City Clerk Johnson regarding the sale of Map 477, Lot 4 to St. Pius X Church.

Chairman Thibault stated as I understand it the bid that came in was refused or they are not going to pay that amount of money. I believe that C. Arthur Soucy is here to speak about that. Mr. Tellier, do you have a recommendation?

Mr. Tellier asked do you folks have a map or do you need a map in front of you.

Chairman Thibault stated let me ask you one thing before this. Isn't this something that we approved at our last meeting and the church was going to pay this price for this land?

Mr. Tellier answered it was Assessor Nichols' viewpoint that there were a couple of abutters that were interested in the lot. Since that time, since the church did not offer to buy it at that price my understanding is that Tom Nichols looked at it a second time and what we don't know is whether there is interest by the other party any longer. Were that to be the case then the value of that lot with having only one abutter and I have the map here that I can share with the Committee...

Chairman Thibault interjected I think we all know. We all went there on a road hearing I think.

Mr. Tellier stated shape wise it is a long sliver of land that would square off the church's property but by itself doesn't have a lot of utility. My understanding from Assessor Nichols is that the value could be adjusted somewhat.

Chairman Thibault asked do you have a recommendation as to what it should be adjusted to.

Mr. Tellier answered at this point it was his recommendation to lower it by half and should the church not offer to buy it then just put it out to bid again.

Chairman Thibault asked what would be half of that.

Mr. Tellier answered it is at \$6,500. The request could start at \$3,000. Just make it \$3,000. It could go to bid and were the other...there is only one other abutter.

Mr. Soucy stated I represent Monsignor Anthony Frontiero of St. Pius Church. We have been looking to buy this little sliver for many, many years and it finally came up for sale. We definitely would like to buy it. We would like to square off our property. Our church has grown by leaps and bounds and we wouldn't want to see anybody else have this piece of land but ourselves. I know that the church group is not going to build on it. If you remember a few years ago when Weston School was being remodeled they approached us and we gave them our school for \$1/year for two solid years. It is not that we are looking for anything. We are willing to pay a decent price. We don't want anybody else to buy this parcel because we want to square off our land. It is to the advantage of the kids of the parish and the kids of the community. We have a skating rink out back that the whole City uses and we maintain it. We let Central hockey use our rink at times for practice. We are looking for a favor from the City. We would like to buy this parcel and we think we should be able to buy it.

Alderman Garrity asked is there any interest for the other abutter.

Mr. Soucy replied he says yes then he says no. He says I might buy it or I might not buy it.

Alderman Garrity asked, Tom, if there is interest from the other abutter are we held liable at all where it has to be offered to that other person also. Is there a liability factor?

Deputy City Solicitor Arnold answered I don't know of any requirement that you do that. It has been past practice of the Board on certain occasions to insure you get the best price for the property but you could find it surplus to City needs and vote to sell it to a particular abutter. If you wanted to do so...I am just looking to see if this was tax-deeded property, which it was so if you vote to sell the property by a mechanism other than a public auction or some type of public sale you would have to do so by ordinance.

Alderman Garrity asked do we have to go to public auction.

Alderman Gatsas answered otherwise we would have to do it by ordinance.

Alderman Gatsas moved that it go to public auction with a minimum bid of \$3,000. Alderman Garrity duly seconded the motion.

Mr. Tellier stated should the other abutter have any desire for it he is going to bid the minimum bid. It may be very well that there is some other agenda why he may not want the church to have it. It may be that simple, however, what we have here is only two abutters. The church and one other individual who is removed but has vacant land abutting that parcel.

Chairman Thibault asked but if it goes to public auction he has a right to bid right.

Mr. Tellier answered yes.

Mr. Soucy stated I agree to some extent that he has a right but we did not have or I don't think we had a right to buy the parcel that he bought that we wanted for years. Maybe the church was notified that the parcel was being sold but I doubt it very much – the other parcel, the one that he owns now. We also had wanted to buy that parcel. I don't say we weren't notified because we had so many pastors in three years – one died, one moved and the finance committee was not notified but I think that personally you should sell it to the church. We need this parcel. If

it goes to bid, he will probably bid some ridiculous amount and we are going to lose and the kids are going to lose.

Chairman Thibault stated we have to listen to our City Solicitor to make sure that it is legal for you as well as us so whatever he tells us to do.

Deputy City Solicitor Arnold stated as I said before I guess there has been a determination that this is surplus property. With just cause under the surplus property statute you could vote to sell it to a particular abutter but if you do that you have to do it by ordinance since it is tax-deeded property. Tax-deeded property either has to go through a public sale mechanism such as auction or sealed bids or it has to be done by ordinance pursuant to state statute.

Chairman Thibault called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman Lopez stated I would just like to ask the Committee...I know the Chairman is going to be out of town on July 15 and I was wondering if the Committee would have a meeting on Wellington Road before the full Board meeting that night. Mr. MacKenzie is prepared and time is essential. I would just ask the Committee to have a meeting prior to the Board meeting to address that one item. If you would order that, Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate it.

Chairman Thibault stated I have no problem with that. If the Committee wants to meet, I have no problem with that. I will be gone for several weeks.

Alderman Lopez stated but you are the only one who can call the meeting.

Chairman Thibault stated okay we will have a meeting on July 15.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Garrity it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee